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ABSTRACT

Participants in a symposium concerned with issues affecting rural New York State identified strengths and weaknesses and suggested policy in relation to three broad goals in the area of human services and community life: (1) increase community awareness of problems affecting rural localities, including the causes and effects of crime, violence, and poverty; (2) develop an integrated system of human services intended for individuals affected by alcoholism, substance abuse, mental illness, and developmental disabilities; and (3) unify rural community action in the areas of day-to-day operation of state government and as an advocate for rural policy. Among rural strengths cited were easy access to public officials, neighborliness, opportunities to participate in local government, and a growing number of rural advocacy units in state government. Weaknesses included reluctance by many to acknowledge the existence of serious social problems in rural communities, untrained local justices, and urban-oriented regulations. Policy suggestions dealt with mandatory social sensitivity and awareness training for rural police and justices, permissive legislation allowing for a single organizational unit to provide all human services within a county or counties, and establishment of executive and legislative bodies with responsibility for rural concerns at the state level. (JHZ)

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# HUMAN SERVICES AND COMMUNITY LIFE IN RIIRAL NEW YORK STATE: AN ACTION STRATEGY

NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON RURAL RESOURCES
SENATOR CHARLES D. COOK, CHAIRMAN

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# INTRODUCTION

Presented herein is one of the nine reports of the Second Symposium of the Legislative Commission on Rural Resources.

The first Symposium, held in 1983, began a process of both analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of Rural New York and establishing public policy goals which ought to be pursued.

Throughout 1984, the report of the first Symposium was scrutinized through a series of ten public hearings held across New York State.

A final report entitled "Rural New York in Transition" was published in January 1985. That report provided the raw material from which the Second Symposium began constructing an "Action Strategy for Rural New York."

The Second Symposium convened February 6, 7, and 8 at the Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, with more than 180 rural advocates from across upstate New York in attendance. In workshop sessions, Symposium participants hammered out a list of action responses to the problems which were placed before them in "Rural New York in Transition."

The results of their work are proudly and gratefully submitted herewith.

I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the special efforts of some 40 persons who performed leadership tasks.

These include: my collegues from the legislature who chaired the workshop groups; the staff personnel from both the Senate and Assembly, as well as from several administrative departments, who assisted with the planning and conduct of the Symposium; and, members of both the Commission staff and my own legislative staff who cooperated as clerical and technical support for the workshop leaders.

Whatever else may result from the Symposium, this report is testimony to the existance of a rich reservoir of dedicated, talented people who have a deep commitment to preserving the best of rural New York's heritage. Our progress thus far has been encouraging. It is important, however, that we continue moving forward in fully developing rural New York's considerable potential to improve the quality of life for the state as a whole.

Senator Charles D. Cook
Chairman
Legislative Commission on
Rural Resources

## FOR YOUR HELP IN UNDERSTANDING THIS REPORT

This report is a working document rather than an historical account; therefore, it is constructed in a format that will enable you to follow the logical progression through which the final action recommendations have been formulated.

Participants at the second Symposium were asked to review the report entitled "Rural New York in Transition", henceforth to be referred to as "the report."

From the report, each workshop group was asked to identify three areas of concern toward which they would direct their attention. You will therefore find this document divided into those three categories. Throughout this publication, the numbering system is purely for ease of identification and does not signify any sequence either of importance or procedure.

Heading up each area of concern is a generalized goal.

The goal is then defined more specifically into two categories:

First are the assets and undeveloped potential of rural New York which are capable of being utilized more fully;

Second are identified problems and shortcomings which will be addressed.

Following, is a list of existing tools which can be used in achieving the goal. It is assumed that using whatever resources are at hand is the first step to be taken.

The last analytical step identifies those problems which will continue to be stumbling blocks in developing an effective strategy.

Finally, with a well-developed statement of purpose, the Symposium workshops put aside the survey report and began to formulate a response to the purpose they had defined.

Even though each workshop group was presented with an outline of procedure, the differences in subject matter and the divergence in group dynamics which developed in the respective workshops resulted in differing formats for the recommendations which were developed. These are presented in basically unedited form for your consideration and comment.

At several points in the above presentation, the Commission has inserted material from the 1984 public hearings which clarify or expand upon the basic item under consideration.

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY AWARENESS

### Goal Statement One

Increase community awareness of problems affecting rural localities, including the causes and effects of crime, violence, and poverty.

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY AWARENESS

### Related Strengths and Assets

- Relatively easy access to public officials as well as opportunities for citizens to participate in local government and make significant impact within the community.

- Visibly active community groups with strong community identity and volunteerism components.

- Emphasis on neighborliness and concern for individuals.

- An unparalleled quality of life and safety that is not found in urban areas.

The quality of life in urban areas has deteriorated. I remember the first few years we were here, it was very difficult to attract professional people to the area. There has become less and less true. People associate with rural areas a quality of life, a quality of safety that is not present in urban areas. This is a very positive aspect to have in our favor.

Seldon Kruger
President
State University of New York at Delhi

- A clear political structure.

- Potential of rural schools, as focal points of community social activities and cultural enrichment, to heighten awareness of community outreach and self-help programs.

- Clear access to information. Libraries continue to carry out their traditional role as the primary information sources in rural communities. Rural libraries are often providers of counseling services for under-educated adults, of opportunities to learn about local and regional history, arts and culture, and of information concerning community services, public affairs, and cultural events.

Libraries continue to carry out their historic role as the primary information sources in rural communities. With the local community, the library is a place - a focal point - where activities, materials, and people come together. In many small communities, the

Related Strengths and Assets (Cont'd)

library is the only public building other than the post office. In a small school, the library is often the place where students and teachers come together for creative, unstructured, multi-disciplinary activities.

Laura B. Chodos
New York State Board of Regents
Judicial District IV

- Wealth of cultural resources throughout New York State, including rich and colorful histories. Strong and diverse folk heritages linked to many ethnic groups and native peoples, museums and libraries, art organizations, etc.

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY AWARENESS

### Impediments and Related Weaknesses

- Unwillingness of rural policymakers and citizens to acknowledge the existence of serious social maladies in many rural communities.

- Although police in rural areas are concerned and cooperative in fighting rural problems, such as crime and domestic violence, they are often unable to respond effectively due to logistics.

Police response to rural problems may be inconsistent. Diverse police forces are not trained together and individual police officers may be unfamiliar with new legal developments which pertain to family violence.

Bobbi Doupe
Counselor/Coordinator
Delaware Opportunities Safe Against Violence

- Lack of awareness by elected local government officials of the need for centralized, coordinated avenues to deal with rural social ills. Because such problems are not highly visible within rural communities, many officials often deny their existence and fail to recognize the serious and growing repercussions of rural crime, violence, and poverty.

- An untrained local judicial system, coupled with the general breakdown of the family structure and the accompanying pathologies and effects on community life, often result in inadequate local responses to rural problems, particularly all forms of familial violence.

- Underdeveloped and uncoordinated information networks which prevent rural counties from providing a central focus for rural social problems. Social service agencies and law enforcement provide only fragmented solutions to issues such as crime, violence, and poverty, which diminishes the potential for their programs to significantly impact upon a community.

- Increase in social problems and maladies in rural communities, which are often masked by the idyllic view of rural lifestyle:

Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

- Homicide rates have increased in rural areas, but they have not come anywhere close to reaching the high proportions found elsewhere in the state. Juvenile arrest rates in rural and metropolitan areas, however, are looking more similar now than previously.

- The suicide rate, a measure of well-being, has been significantly higher in rural than in metropolitan counties for over three decades. Although the gap has narrowed, the suicide rate in currently 14 percent higher in rural areas. Some of the issues of rural poverty, lack of services, and lack of economic opportunity are related to this.

I think the statistic that the suicide rate in rural areas is about ten percent higher than the average population is fairly accurate. Some of the issues of rural poverty, of lack of economic opportunity, of lack of services are related to this trend. Yet, that is not to say that pouring dollars into the situation is the answer to the problem. I think if we were able to respond to the general mental health problems of depression, domestic violence, and sexual abuse in a broader kind of way, we might see a reduction in this statistic.

Stephen Dungan
Director
Delaware County Mental Health Services

- The domestic violence rate is currently 28 percent higher in rural than in metropolitan areas. Similarly, the rate of suspected child abuse and maltreatment is 21 percent higher.

- The proportion of families in economic poverty has for many years remained higher in rural than in metropolitan areas. Similarly, rural areas have always had the smallest proportion of people in affluence.

- Below average income of rural elderly as compared to their urban counterparts and lesser ability to find employment for supplementing fixed incomes.

The current inability of service systems to meet the tremendous demands for transporta-

Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

tion, health care, housing, and the variety of supportive services that are and will be required to maintain the growing aged population in rural communities is of significant concern.

Stockton Clark
Director
Rural Aging Services Program
NYS Office for the Aging

- Many rural people in need of social services assistance are often reluctant to seek help due to the stigma attached to such support. In addition, the impersonalness of agencies can sometimes make those who are in need of assistance feel as if they are groveling.

In rural areas, residents have a real lack of anonymity. Everyone knows everyone else's business. For example, this can intimidate a battered woman who decides against filing a police report from taking any other public action because she does't want the facts of her home life to be known and discussed by the residents of the community.

Debra Robinson
Schoharie County Abuse Committee

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY AWARENESS

### Policy Suggestions

Legislation would be enacted to promote more sophisticated forms of social sensitivity and awareness training programs, relating to violence and human services, for rural law enforcement officials in order to enable them to more effectively respond to the growing and changing needs of the communities they serve.

I. Such a program will include a minimum degree of mandatory training for all local police agencies as well as amend local justice training programs to include exposure to social factors relating to their work.

II. Rural communities would be encouraged to become more actively involved in sensitizing, educating, and tapping the resource potential of a variety of groups with regard to the problems of crime, violence, and poverty. Participating groups will include:

- local and county government;
- police agencies;
- judicial officials;
- clergy;
- community based organizations;
- state agencies;
- elementary, secondary, and higher education institutions;
- the media;
- members of the medical profession.

## Policy Suggestions (Cont'd)

Rural elected officials and planners need all types of information to make more effective decisions for the community. Development information dealing with demographics and the economy, as well as information dealing with soils, topography, and wildlife needs to be available for sound decisionmaking.

Wesley Maughan
Director
Community Development Program
Utah State University Extension

All schools should address the problem of domestic violence. Perhaps another part of the curriculum could emphasize community services that are available in each community. This would aid not only the children, but their families as well. We need a large scale educational program directed at the general public to raise awareness of the problem of domestic violence and to dispel the myths and stereotypes that surround it.

Bobbi Doupe
Counselor/Coordinator
Delaware Opportunities Safe
Against Violence

III. In order to facilitate community awareness, basic in-service training including an awareness to rural problems, techniques to address such problems, resources to resolve problems, and a clarification of roles and responsibilities, will also be required for the following personnel and organizations:

A. Local government officials, through the Association of Counties, Association of Towns, and Conference of Mayors.

B. Licensed professionals through additional requirements promulgated by the State Education Department.

C. Rural citizens through the availability of comprehensive and carefully developed community awareness campaigns, tailored to the varied and diverse needs of individual communities.

Promotion of the expansion of rural networking, provision of equitable services in critical systems to all citizens of the state, the education of local decisionmakers, community planners and residents, creation of a system for in-service training for school faculties and administration, and the ensuring of consideration of rural concerns in public programs are just a few of the goals that we in the alcohol treatment field share with the Commission on Rural Resources.

Lucia Boyer
Executive Director
Jefferson County Committee on
Alcoholism

## Policy Suggestions (Cont'd)

IV. The New York State Board of Regents and the state mental hygiene agencies, through a review of county plans, will be responsible for recommending and developing these programs.

V. The program, to begin April 1, 1987, and administered to everyone involved on a 3-year cycle, will be conducted by the following:

- State Police Academy and local community colleges;
- State Education Department, through licensing and continuing education requirements;
- State Office of Court Administration;
- Local government offices, through community service boards, volunteer training, and outreach programs.

## FOCUS ON AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF HUMAN SERVICES DELIVERY

### Goal Statement Two

Develop an action plan for the establishment of an integrated system of quality human services in rural areas which are accessible, effective, and efficient. The delivery of these services would be targeted toward families, youth, adults, and elderly affected by alcoholism, substance abuse, mental illness, and developmental disabilities, resulting in family violence, family disruption, and poverty.

## FOCUS ON AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF HUMAN SERVICES DELIVERY

### Related Strengths and Assets

- Community support systems contribute to the comfort and security of rural residents. The existence of public and private human service programs coupled with a seasoned cadre of realistic professionals who are openly attuned to the unique needs and problems of rural populations greatly enhance the delivery of social services in rural New York State.

Just a few of the vital human services provided by voluntary organizations in rural areas are: maternal and child health, preschool education and family services, rehabilitation and appropriate employment for the disabled, child abuse prevention and intervention, weatherization and low-income housing, public transportation, and legal assistance.

David Wilson
Executive Director
St. Lawrence County Community
Development Program

- An emphasis on neighborliness and concern for individuals has long been a trademark that has bound rural New Yorkers together.

- Support by the state's executive and legislative branches for laws, programs, and services which preserve and maintain the dignity and independence of human life.

- Statewide regional/local advocacy groups intent on heightening awareness of and support for rural problems, such as crime, poverty, and violence.

What is commendable about rural living is that most everyone knows what the other person is doing. If someone does have a problem, oftentimes by word of mouth the proper agency will receive a referral and be able to tend to that particular situation.

Thomas Briggs
Director
Delaware County Office for the Aging

- Willingness of religious organizations to provide human services and outreach programs, as well as financial assistance, for rural residents in need of assistance.

## FOCUS ON AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF HUMAN SERVICES DELIVERY

### Impediments and Related Weaknesses

- Difficulties encountered in providing community/personal services, including fragmentation of service providers and delivery systems.

  - Some rural citizens may "fall between the cracks" of available programs and services, thus creating an underserved, often isolated rural population.

  - Lack of accountability at all levels among various rural human services programs and providers.

  - Lack of incentives for the coordination of resources commanded by the multiplicity of service providers located in rural areas.

One of the problems for my professional staff in conducting in-service training for other agencies is that we have not received any reimbursement. The way the Department of Mental Hygiene has funding structured in the state is our only source of revenue. There are increasing demands placed upon us to raise revenues by conducting reimburseable units of service rather than doing the traditional kinds of community mental health things that might address a particular issue. We are being pushed from both ends.

Stephen Dungan
Director
Delaware County Mental Health
Services

- Limited availability, applicability, usage, and competition for state, federal, and private resources.

  - Multiple funding sources with different regulations and requirements which predetermine how funds may be spent and which are urban-biased.

  - Limited fund raising capacities in both the public and private sectors.

  - Local use may be limited by inadequate knowledge of existing programs, the inability of municipalities to deal with central bureaucracies, as well as some degree of cultural resistance to the use of government funds. This serves to dampen local

Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

initiative and enthusiasm for state and federal programs. Additionally, poor community perception of large government bureaucracy may stem from concern over additional financial burdens placed on the community to continue services when grants expire.

- Inequitable allocation of state and federal financial resources allows certain areas to receive greater funding. This is because aid formulas are heavily dependent upon the financial resources of the community (such as the size of the tax base), and its ability to obtain matching funding. The "numbers game" makes it difficult to qualify for programs based on "numbers of potential clients".

In 1981, the Community Development Program received an annual grant of $183,000 to operate its 12 neighborhood centers, maintain an effective and accountable central administration and maintain such programs as weatherization for which the state does not reimburse the full costs of operation. By this year, that annual support from the Community Srvices Block Grant has declined to $112,000, not enough to maintain existing services, let alone respond to the increased need as more and more families slipped below the poverty line. The state's own Community Services Block Grant Advisory Council has proposed a way of dealing with this problem. However, that proposal seems to be in limbo because, as a friend in Albany informed me, "It's not very high on anybody's priority list, except poor people's.

David Wilson
Executive Director
St. Lawrence County Community
Development Program

- Inflexibility of the regulatory structure that results in program models inappropriately tailored for rural areas.

  - Rural programs are often costlier due to the dispersed nature of the rural population. However, higher cost per unit of service delivery is not factored into existing formulas.

  - Community organizations share the problems of providing vital services in spite of continuing barriers erected by the State of New York. These include urban assumptions, urban-oriented regulations, and inadequate resources.

Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

We are deeply concerned about the major gaps present in the area of mental health services. Some of these gaps are due to problems inherent in the mental health system in New York State. Some are due to the relative isolation of many rural counties. New York has one of the most complex and cumbersome systems for the delivery of mental health hygiene services. We have four separate state agencies with legions of bureaucrats, reams of codes, rules, and regulations, countless funding streams, program and planning guides that are sometimes duplicative and other times in direct contradiction with one another. We are also burdened with a net deficit financing scheme that has failed to provide assistance dollars to rural localities to develop comprehensive core services needed to adequately care for our mentally ill.

Stephen Dungan
Director
Delaware County Community Mental
Health Services

- Standards and requirements that are too restrictive and prevent local providers from coordinating and/or developing creative cost-effective solutions to service delivery needs.

Our county's Community Development Program and the people it serves were nearly denied participation in the recent Emergency Food and Shelter Program. The regulations first published by the New York State Department of Social Services would have prohibited participation by any organization with elected public officials or members of their family on its governing board. Now, in rural New York, service as an elected public official is largely a voluntary job which is filled by some of the community's best informed citizens. It would be madness to try to implement a countywide program without their support and without their information. While we were fortunate in getting that particular regulation changed, the same prohibition is still part of the regulations of the Division of Housing and Community Renewal.

David Wilson
Executive Director
St. Lawrence County Community
Development Program

Funding sources seem to assume that rural areas require less money to combat social problems based on smaller populations and smaller case loads. Consequently, rural programs have access to few local funding sources, either governmental or private. The bottom line - operating expenses - result in a higher cost per client served. Thus, a funding agency may be more inclined to allocate money to urban areas for a larger population base.

Debra Robinson
Schoharie County Abuse Committee

Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

- Insufficient access and availability of personal services, while also a concern in metropolitan areas, is exacerbated by the geographic isolation of many rural residents.

  - Inadequate use of state transit funds in rural areas (e.g., mass transit funding provided through Section 18 has not addressed the needs of the rural elderly).

Our county Office for the Aging was so frustrated with the federal funding in transportation that we were forced to raise monies locally through a fund drive for a single bus just to make available to people a limited service. Our elderly population (9,000) is spread out over an area of 1,400 square miles. This, as you can appreciate, is hardly adequate. We still have a high percentage of isolated elderly unable to get to needed services who are totally dependent on relatives or volunteers for transportation.

Thomas Briggs
Director
Delaware County Office for the Aging

  - Lack of of dependable passenger transportation services for the "transportation disadvantaged" (poor, elderly, youth, single car families, etc.) that provides a valuable link to other services in the rural community. This problem is especially critical since 50 percent of rural households have only one vehicle and 11 percent have none.

  - Transportation needs for service delivery require an increasingly large share of limited budgets.

- Vulnerability of small and new programs in rural areas.

  - Many human services programs in rural communities are initially funded for only one or two years, and it is difficult to establish credibility in such a short time. Just as credibility develops, the funds are cut off.

Debra Robinson
Schoharie County Abuse Committee

Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

- Local resistance to the concept of planning. Generally, many rural municipalities do not fully understand the importance of proper, integrated planning to the community as a whole. The need exists to facilitate the planning process in local government.

- Technical services are not utilized to their fullest potential.

- Lack of a clear definition setting forth minimum standards to assess the "quality of care" for human services programs.

## FOCUS ON AN INTEGRATED SYSTEM OF HUMAN SERVICES DELIVEY

### Policy Suggestions

Permissive legislation which would allow a rural county or group of counties to form a single organizational unit to provide all human services within that county or counties.

I. Local departments affected by the legislation would include: social services, offices for the aging, youth bureaus, mental health, alcoholism, substance abuse, developmental disabilities, probation, public health, and all local human service providers funded by state or federal sources. Excluded services would be those funded by non-government sources and state operated programs.

II. A Human Resources Department would be created, headed by a commissioner accountable to the supervising county or counties and to the supervising state officials.

III. A minimum of three years of state funding for the testing of this model.

IV. The Department of Social Services would entertain proposals from localities. Such proposals would provide for a detailed plan for the consolidation and integration of services. The plan shall:

A. Assure continuance of all state/federal mandated programs and services; a planning process combining the structures of the local community services board and Social Services Consolidated Plan (Title XX); and the guarantee of a minimum level of available services.

B. Coordinate all functions previously handled by the departments and programs that are being integrated, to include: intake and assignment; site location and accessibility; service delivery; service management and monitoring; and fiscal management.

C. Detail the regulations, both state and federal, that would require waivers, alteration, or relaxation.

D. Place responsibility for review and approval of the plan with the state Council on Children and Families, which would coordinate the necessary review of other affected agencies. State regulatory oversight would be maintained in the already established programs and services.

Policy Suggestions (Cont'd)

E. Utilize a block grant funding concept.

1. A county or counties participating in the model would be required to provide an amount equal to the total local share of all consolidated programs and services during the fiscal year immediately prior to implementation. The local share would then be frozen at that level for the period of the model.

2. Funding increases of state and federal funds would be detailed in the plan as well as in the yearly plan update. Administrative cost increases would be borne at 100 percent by the state, less any additionally available federal funding.

V. The Legislative Commission on Rural Resources would provide technical assistance and facilitation to any county or counties desiring to participate in the pilot program.

VI. The legislation would also allow for a comprehensive evaluation by the Legislative Commission on Expenditure Review at the completion of the three-year period.

VII. Legislation would become effective immediately upon passage. Implementation of the local planning process would coincide with the beginning of the county fiscal year.

VIII. The pilot project would be subject to review during its third year. If found desirable, it would be continued for one additional year during which a plan for permanent continuation would be developed. Assuming the viability of such a model is demonstrated, there would be a standing local option for all other interested rural counties to apply.

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ACTION

Strategy Outline for Goal III

Unify rural community action in the areas of day-to-day operation of state government and as an advocate for rural policy.

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ACTION

### Related Strengths and Assets

- A growth in executive and legislative entities and agencies who have the rural populations as part of their constituency (e.g., Legislative Commission on Rural Resources and Governor's Task Force on Rural Affairs).

  - Rural advocacy units within existing state agencies (e.g., Department of Agriculture and Markets and State Office for the Aging).

- During the 1970's, rural counties in New York State experienced population increases, a turnaround of the seemingly inevitable dissipation of the rural populace.

  - The associated demographic shifts will heighten the need for rationally planned human services delivery systems in rural areas and will increase the potential and leverage for significant involvement of rural citizens in designing the social programs it will require.

- Community support systems in rural areas, including:

  - Emphasis on neighborliness and concern for the individual;

  - Visibly active community groups with strong community identity and volunteerism components (e.g., churches, granges, volunteer ambulance squads, etc.);

  - Opportunities to participate in local government and to make significant personal impact within the community.

In rural New York, the providers of health and human services are often not units or agencies of government, but voluntary, private, non-profit organizations. Thus, rural areas should take appropriate credit for the savings gained by using such organizations as cost-effective and efficient deliverers of needed community services.

David Wilson
Executive Director
St. Lawrence County Community

## Related Strengths and Assets (Cont'd)

- Cooperative spirit of government, private industry, educational groups, health organizations, and concerned citizens in recent efforts to strive for the mutual betterment and long-range security of rural New York.

What we need to look at is a cooperative effort of government, private industry, educational groups, health organizations, and so forth, in order to draw us together so we can strive for the mutual betterment and long-range security of rural New York.

Whitty Sanford
Executive Director
Overcast Agricultural Center
Margaretville, New York

- Growing diversity in fabric and lifestyles of rural communities, preventing any single standard depiction of "rural New York."

## Impediments and Related Weaknesses

- Difficulties encountered in providing community/personal services, including fragmentation of service providers and delivery systems and lack of incentives to support more comprehensive strategies for implementing human service programs.

  - There is a lack of a coordinated approach to social problem-solving in rural areas (e.g., in family violence cases, social workers, law enforcement officials, and local school district personnel are often unaware of what the other is doing to solve the problem).

  - In areas where services are being provided, there is sometimes a lack of coordination that has led to a duplication of services. This is confusing for the agency, the client, the family, and for all professionals that are involved in delivering and coordinating services.

An overall shrinking of services has been caused by a massive amount of regulation and duplication of efforts on the part of the state agencies. Because of the size of our program, we have to be all things to all people.

Stephen Dungan
Director
Delaware County Community Mental
Health Services

- Rural decisionmakers and professionals encounter difficulties as they try to differentiate their delivery strategies from those of inappropriate urban-oriented approaches that are pushed on them from above. Although rural areas require greater flexibility in the design and delivery of services, they have not been given sufficient latitude to create innovative program guidelines and solutions.

  - On the federal level, "Washington" looks on New York State as urban in its expanse and people. Moreover, most state policies and programs have mistakenly assumed that the application of metropolitan requirements and technical approaches could be effective in rural areas.

City people have an idyllic view of life in the country. It is a beautiful life - and

## Impediments and Related Weaknesses (Cont'd)

that's why most farmers stay with it. They love it. But it is also tremendously exhausting and stressful.

Arlene Shako
Farmer/Sociologist
Schoharie County

- Lack of political clout by rural legislators in state and federal legislative policy arenas and forums.

- Rural New York has been increasingly dominated by management, control, and planning of metropolitan-based institutions and criteria, where participation by rural citizens is minimal, if non-existent. A continuing eclipse of local governance, self-determination, and control is evident.

Without incentives and opportunities to utilize creativity and practical expertise, there may be only limited improvement to human services delivery in rural New York .

Floyd Metzger
Administrator
Guthrie Clinic, Ltd.
Sayre, PA

By quality of life, I do not mean bringing ballet or chamber music to small upstate towns. That presumption flows precisely out of those values which too long have been dictated by informed, well-meaning urbanites as to what rural New York should receive in the way of cultural benefits. At the same time, I would ask that those of us who live and work in rural areas not assume that the satisfaction of art or culture is of little or no importance when compared to the demands of everyday life. There is an impoverishment of spirit and imagination which can have tangible consequences, including ones detrimental to the economy and health of our rural communities.

Craig Gilborn
Director
Adirondack Museum

- Lack of trust-building between state government and its localities, particularly in rural areas.

## Policy Suggestions for Goal III

1. Establish two separate bodies in the executive and legislative branches of New York State government in order to formulate more comprehensive approaches to rural problem solving and to pursue rural interests.

   - The executive branch body would be a sub-cabinet level entity and reconstituted from the existing Rural Affairs Task Force. The new Council would be composed of existing state agencies which would coordinate and integrate rural programs and regulations. In essence, the Council's major focus would be to oversee the day-to-day operations of government as they relate to rural counties.

   - The legislative body would consist of a permanent Commission on Rural Development. This group's representation would have broad input, including the involvement of private groups and local county officials. The existing Commission on Rural Resources should be used as the basis for implementing this concept. Areas to be addressed by this Commission include rural advocacy, monitoring the administration of executive branch proposals, and playing an ombudsman role with state agencies. The Commission would also be expected to recommend policy changes associated with rural issues.

If rural people want opportunities for their children near their homes, if they want people to settle and establish businesses in their communities, if they want to attract tourists and tourist dollars, then at some point these ends cannot be regarded as being separate from those conditions which bear on the quality of life available within the larger community.

Craig Gilborn
Director
Adirondack Museum

## HUMAN SERVICES AND COMMUNITY LIFE WORKSHOP

Louise M. Slaughter
Assemblywoman
Workshop Moderator

Jules Kerness
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NYS Senate Child Care Committee
Workshop Facilitator

Sandy Mathes
Director of Constituent Services
Senator Charles D. Cook
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